THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA J. PATEL): (a) and (b) The Board of Directors of OVL is now empowered to take decision on investments of Rs. 300 crore or US$ 75 million whichever is less, beyond which investment proposals are required to be recommended by the Empowered Committee of Secretaries for obtaining the approval of the Government. OVL's proposal for further enhancement of the empowerment to Rs. 1000 crore, in line with the powers granted to the Board of Directors of Navaratna companies, is under consideration of the Government.

(c) Yes, Sir. The V. Krishnamurthy Committee in its recommendation has stated that for any single investment the present limit of Rs. 300 crore be raised to the level of Rs. 2000 crore.

(d) The matter is under consideration of the Government.

Foreign exchange earned from tourists

1603. SHRI S. ANBALAGAN: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the country still lags behind many countries in attracting foreign tourists despite the availability of numerous historic, natural and religious spots in the country;

(b) if so, the comparative figures of number of foreign tourists visited our country and countries such as China during each of the last three years alongwith the foreign exchange earned thereon;

(c) whether Government have ascertained the reasons for poor incoming of foreign tourists; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and the steps proposed to be taken thereon?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) India's rank in foreign tourist arrivals in the world was 47 during 2004. This is an improvement over the earlier years when its rank was 50 during the year 2003 and 54 during 2002.

(b) A statement giving number of foreign tourist arrivals alongwith foreign exchange earned during the last three years for top ten countries in the world as also India during the last three years is attached (See below).

(c) and (d) Despite the fact that India is a long-haul destination, a high growth in foreign tourist arrivals to India has been witnessed in the recent years compared to overall world arrivals. However, it is generally felt that India has lot of potential to improve its share and ranking in world arrivals. The areas that need improvement for further exploiting the vast tourism potential of India include improving the air connectivity and air seat capacity from the top tourist generating countries, improving the tourism infrastructure such as roads connecting to tourist destinations, rail & air connectivity, augmenting the hotel accommodation in the country and promoting & marketing many facets of India as an Incredible destination. A number of initiatives have been taken in this regard by the Ministry in the recent years, which include:—

- Development of tourist spots under its various schemes of infrastructure development for tourist circuits and destinations;
- Focussing on growth of hotel infrastructure particularly budget hotels;
- Enhancing connectivity through augmentation of air capacity and improving road infrastructure to major tourist attractions;
- Direct approach to the consumers through Electronic and Print media through the "Incredible India" Campaign;
- Creation of World Class Collaterals;
- Centralized Electronic Media Campaign;
- Greater focus in the emerging markets particularly in the region of China, North East Asia and South East Asia;

- Participation in Trade Fairs & Exhibitions;
- Use of Internet and web marketing; and
- Generating Tourist Publications.

Statement

Details regarding Foreign Tourist Arrivals and foreign exchange earned

Country	Foreign Tourist Arrivals (In million)			Foreign Exchange Earned (US$ Million)		
	2003	2004	2005	2003	2004	2005
France	75.05	75.12	76.00	37038	40842	42276
Spain	51.83	53.60	55.58	41770	45248	47891
USA	41.21	46.08	49.40	64509	74481	81680
China	32.97	41.76	46.81	17406	25739	29296
Italy	39.60	37.07	36.51	31222	35658	35398
U.K.	24.72	27.71	29.97	22752	27299	30373
Mexico	18.67	20.62	21.92	9457	10753	11755
Germany	18.39	20.14	21.50	22984	27657	29204
Turkey	13.34	16.83	20.27	13203	15888	18152
Austria	19.08	19.37	19.95	14068	15412	15467
India	2.73	3.46	3.92*	3533	4769	5731*

*Provisionsl

Promotion of tourism in Vidarbha, Maharashtra

† 1604. SHRI DATTA MEGHE: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.